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ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AND/AS DIGITAL HUMANITIES

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Introduction

This chapter explores the state of Asian American studies in the digital age and its intersection with the emergence of the "digital humanities" as a field of study. We are concerned with two central lines of inquiry: How does the rich scholarship and history of Asian American studies shape the concerns of Digital Humanities, and how is Asian American studies being shaped by the agendas and pedagogies of the Digital Humanities? Within the realm of media and communication studies, the development of scholarly interest in digital technologies has mirrored the development of new communication technologies. In tracing the connections between communication and culture in a digital world, scholars have worked to make sense of the meaning behind shifting practices of representation, media production, information sharing, community and identity formations, and countless other practices. The use of computing tools and digital methodologies now extends beyond the field of communication to reframe the teaching and research of subjects across the humanities scholarship, forming a diverse set of overlapping research agendas and pedagogies that contend with the intersection between technology and knowledge production. Some of the field's earliest histories begin with "humanities computing,"[1] but transformed into "digital humanities" by 2006 when the National Endowment for the Humanities launched its agency-wide Digital Humanities Initiative. Much of the initial focus within Digital Humanities has centered on digitizing archival materials and working to transform images, text, and other forms of analog data into code. This process of digitization then allows for a wide variety of engagements—the data can be analyzed through algorithms or software, transformed into visualizations or maps, preserved online, made widely accessible and available to the public, or interpreted collaboratively. We can see through these modes of operation that Digital Humanities is many things, including an object of study, a methodology, a set of practices, and a political ideology. The work of digital humanists thus far has often been housed in English and Communication/Media Studies departments, but what we explore in this chapter is the way that the field can and does overlap with important inquiries within American Studies, ethnic studies, and Asian American Studies.

The moment is opportune to consider Asian America as a digital experience, and to theorize the way that this conceptualization bears relevance on what we see as Asian American Digital Humanities. As such, sketching this trajectory of inquiry is important to understanding Asian

American experiences. While Asian Americans studies has reached "critical mass" as a field of influence in terms of its academic institutionalization and professionalization and intellectual maturity to nurture and sustain critical self-reflexivity regarding its precepts as an "Asian American" movement,[2] the relevance of Asian American scholarship is questionable when uncontested precepts about history, culture, and complexity appear lost in the mainstream public consciousness.[3] Yet Asian Americans, it seems, are poised to shape the digital age in novel ways. Asian America is noted for being a wired and engaged online community, influencing platforms like YouTube and Twitter[4] and participating in the rise of a culture and technology innovation economy as the "Asian American creative class."[5] It is tempting to treat these observations as evidence of Asian America becoming the "model minorities" of the digital age. However, to assume this dispossessing narrative of Asian America obscures how the digital turn in Asian American experiences, and the range of complex relationships between Asian Americans and technology, offer insight into understanding the racial dynamics of the digital age. Put differently, the digital age is enabled by a racial dynamic that is often framed within a neoliberal argument for increased access. Indeed, Asian American studies during the digital age must be vigilant to avoid discourses that would position Asian Americans as digitalization's model minorities and reinscribe harmful racialized hierarchies. This way of thinking denies the discipline's founding commitments to activism and social justice, as well as later reformations and reorientations, and can fall into an uncritical embrace of the Digital Humanities simply because Asian Americans appear to gain agency. To this point, we distinguish between using humanities-based inquiries to study the digital, and using digital tools to study the humanities. While the former opens up important possibilities for acknowledging the critical/cultural work that Asian Americans are conducting within the realm of the digital, the latter often seeks to erase the important nuances of context—race, class, gender, sex and history, among other intersecting and networked threads of understanding Asian American experiences, as we will explore below.

Given the diasporic sensibility of many Asian Americans, building and learning to utilize a virtually networked community is clearly a powerful endeavor. Sau-Ling Wong and Rachel Lee, in their introduction to *AsianAmerica.Net*, conjecture that Asian Americans are well suited "to take advantage of virtual reality's community-building potential given the very 'virtualness' built into the group's founding concept."[6] Yet what must be acknowledged is that these assumptions and stereotypes about Asian Americans have been harmful, and do not portray the full picture of how these individuals do or do not have access to and familiarity with communication technologies. We believe that the digital turn in Asian American studies offers a fruitful moment for reconsidering the meaning of Asian America—it provides a chance to sharpen our critiques, broaden our concerns, and rethink our loci of engagement. In exploring this transitional moment, we offer a preliminary sketch of Asian American studies at the digital turn. While the Digital Humanities was not born out of Asian American studies and vice versa, our point of departure, to paraphrase Wendy Hui Kyong Chun's argument for race as technology,[7] is to consider Asian American studies and/as Digital Humanities, to map out points of intersection, and to envision what an Asian American studies during the digital age could accomplish.

Asian America and Technology

The digital age is at once about the use of technologies as well as the creation of media of communication and representation. In Asian American studies, the images and narratives that circulate across mainstream media have long been a point of departure for inquiry and activism since the emergence of an Asian American movement from the revolutionary culture of the

late 1960s. Those working to establish ethnic studies as a discipline and Asian American studies as a critical field of study in universities were joined in their consciousness-raising by Asian American cultural workers—actors/actresses, artists, filmmakers, musicians, writers—and the formation of Asian American independent media arts collectives to advance social justice and empower through representation. Film, television, and other cultural forms were seen as political media—as targets of critique and opportunities to circulate narratives attuned to lived experience. In 1965, Asian American actors in Los Angeles established the East West Players theater organization to produce work that offered Asian American stories beyond popular stereotypes. Six years later, activists and filmmakers in Los Angeles also established Visual Communications with the objective of supporting Asian American filmmaking. In 1976, activists and filmmakers in New York City formed Asian CineVision to support Asian American filmmaking on the East Coast. In 1980, activists and filmmakers in San Francisco created the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (now the Center for Asian American Media) to promote independent Asian American filmmaking and Asian American productions for public broadcasting in cooperation with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service.

While concerns regarding the politics of representation across film and television have an established trajectory within Asian American studies scholarship, the study of Asian American representation in the digital age is still taking shape, and generally bridging the methods of media studies to Asian American new media. In this regard, what may be characterized as digital work in Asian American studies mirrors Tara McPherson's observation that early studies of race and the digital tend to be "a critique of representations *in* new media or the building of digital archives about race, modes that largely were deployed at the surface of our screens, or, second, debates about access to media—that is, the digital divide. Such work rarely tied race to analyses of form, phenomenology, or computation."[8] The focus of inquiry has been on the use and role of technology in Asian American cultural production and representation, prompted by observations over unprecedented forms of Asian American participation in YouTube, Twitter, blogging, among other new media platforms. For example, the activism of Phil Yu and his blog Angry Asian Man, the email campaigns launched by filmmaker Justin Lin around his film *Better Luck Tomorrow* (2001), or the rise of YouTube stars like Ryan Higa and Kevin Wu. The emergence of an alternate, oppositional arena of Asian American representational practice— what Kent Ono and Vincent Pham[9] note as Asian American independent and vernacular media— has provided wider opportunities to study the narrative and visual online representations of Asian America as well as the relationship between Asian Americans and technology.

Such examinations of the way that Asian American communities are using and responding to the changing technologies of representation and participation find precedent in earlier media studies research. Yet within these inquiries around representation, it is important to acknowledge the dominant (and problematic) discourse around Asian Americans as somehow preternaturally wired. The hypervisibility of what we might call the Asian cyborg has come to stand in stark contrast to the invisibility of Asian Americans as represented within mainstream media narratives. One article on a technology site goes so far as to ask, "Do the Asians have technology running through their veins?" This question reminds us of how Asian bodies are continually reinscribed as alien and otherized in relation to technology—a linkage that is reinforced through the sidelining of Asian actors within the routine portrayal of the "tech guy" in procedural television. Together, these linkages begin to imply that the speed of technological innovation in Asia and its adoption by Asian bodies is somehow biological or innate. Such images of the e-proficient model minority participate in recreating a kind of high-tech Orientalism where technology and Asian bodies are inextricably bound. Within techno-Orientalism, histories of economic competition between

the US and Japan or China become visible in depictions of Asians as alien and dehumanized—a contemporary version of Said's Orientalism, wherein the East is essentialized as primitive, exotic, and less than human. In an era when the United States fears the economic power of Asia, techno-Orientalism casts a threatening pall over a population that possesses the ability to manipulate and profit from technology.[10] The fear of the Asian predilection for science and technology is particularly alive and well in the world of fictional representations—from the evil Dr. Fu Manchu and his technological warfare to an entire category of cyberpunk that relies on a decidedly orientalized notion of the future. Science fiction movies such as *Cloud Atlas*, *Blade Runner*, *The Fifth Element*, *The Matrix*, and *Serenity* consistently include Oriental tropes and Asian iconography in their speculative visions of the future, portraying Asians as efficient technocratic robots who have somehow managed to influence every aspect of the urban landscape. As Timothy Yu states,

> The postmodern city of science fiction, while sharing some of the attributes of the globalized, transnational, borderless space of postmodernity apotheosized in the notion of "cyberspace," remains racialized and marked (if superficially) by history, exposing the degree to which Western conceptions of postmodernity are built upon continuing fantasies of—and anxieties about—the Orient.[11]

The connection between technology and the yellow peril lurks behind any discussion of the way that Asian Americans are using technology for political empowerment, community organizing, or identity development. These stereotypes are complicated by the fact that the positioning of Asia/Asian Americans as proficient in technology is not entirely unfounded. Many Asian countries are indeed at the forefront of technological innovation, exporting their high-tech goods across the globe. Moreover, research has shown that Asian Americans are the highest users of the Internet and broadband amongst all racial groups, even when compared to white users.[12] As we will demonstrate, Asian American studies in the digital age critically examines such assumptions and applications of data, arguing that the politics of race and representation is a necessary part of the digital conversation. The critical work of Asian American studies rethinks the notion of the digital divide in the Digital Humanities—that access for racial minorities is an opportunity to circumvent the barriers that prevent access to mainstream media—but that open-access itself is not detached from the politics of representation. For Asian Americans and the Digital Humanities, the discourse of the model minority and "techno-orientalism" is deeply entrenched in popular culture, and we must develop new tools for understanding and reshaping this articulation.

Asian American Digital Humanities: A Method

We can see the concern about representation in the digital age has often centered on the images and narratives of Asian Americans within digital technology. Yet it could be argued that Asian America itself is constituted by technologies—a premise that opens new approaches to understanding Asian American identity and race during the digital age, as well as the object of study for Asian American studies. The notion that race is constituted by digital technologies and not merely represented by their platforms helps us to see that the Digital Humanities is an ideological—as opposed to objective—endeavor. Following Michael Omi and Howard Winant's (1994) influential work on racial formation theory,[13] the emergence of what may be described as an Asian American Digital Humanities gives us the opportunity to reflect on how the formation of Asian America assumes meaning within social relations shaped and determined by social,

economic, and political forces—including the apparatuses of technology. Technology serves as an organizing principle for understanding racial identities and the deployment of technology operates within the racial categories at work. Seen in this way, "Asian America" is more complex than speaking to some unchanging racial essence, but the discourses of race and technology are intertwined. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun makes a compelling argument to consider race *as* technology, to shift "from the what of race to the how of race, from knowing race to doing race by emphasizing the similarities between race and technology."[14] The claim for a digital racial formation "displaces ontological questions of race-debates over what race really is and is not, focused on separating ideology from truth—with ethical questions: what relations does race set up?"[15] This framing allows Asian American Digital Humanities to find application beyond traditional concerns of civic empowerment and its sites of engagement.

The formation of Internet and technology culture in the latter half of the 20th century has contributed to the view of digital technology and life as an idyllic space of equality, or an opportunity to move beyond identity politics and to conflate the question of race with the answer of access. Lisa Nakamura contends that this offline view of race neglects how race and racism assume meanings online. As she points out, we must continue to ask how people of color can and do participate in new media technologies, and how the formation of racial identities is intrinsically connected to the design of online interfaces. She argues that a fuller study of digital life necessitates knowing "the specific conditions under which new media are produced as well as consumed, circulated, and exchanged. Interactivity goes both ways as well; Web sites create users who can interact with them, just as texts create their readers."[16] Digital media are unique loci of enunciation for racial experiences; they are interactive and participatory spaces where race develops a new sense of legibility within a community of online users of color. Similar to Chun, Nakamura's research in what may be categorized as Asian American Digital Humanities is less concerned about deepening coherence around the concept of Asian America, as has been a focus of debate for Asian American studies. Rather, the suggestion is to view the connection between the discourses of race and digital technologies as an opportunity to bring into being new forms of agency and new ways to critically engage the meaning of race and racism. Nakamura cites the work of Kandice Chuh,[17] who considers Asian American studies as a method addressing a set of concerns rather than instantiating an intelligible subject. The study of the relationship between Asian America and technology as being mutually constitutive positions Asian American Digital Humanities scholarship to reframe the meaning of Asian American experiences. As Nakamura writes, the study of Asian American new media, of the relationship between technology and the composition of Asian American identity, "centers on the possibility for hybrid and de-essentialized Asian identities that address contemporary narratives about power, difference, perception, and the visual."[18] It is this expression of hybridity and breaking down of borders that we see as an expanding, generative site for scholarship within Asian American Digital Humanities.

Race in the Digital Humanities

Although there has been much important work by critical race theorists on the way that minority populations are represented within digital media and the shape of their participation within digital communities, there has been a much wider chasm between critical race theory and the Digital Humanities. Tara McPherson observes the dearth of discussion about the intersection between race/racial paradigms and subjects like computational systems, programming languages, or cyberstructures. This absence can be traced to the very precepts of digital culture, when the designs of technological systems during post–World War II era embraced values of simplification

and modularization in organizing knowledge. McPherson notes that, at face value, these seemingly objective computational organizing principles opposed the deeply embedded values of recognition, empowerment, and complexity espoused by the social justice movements that were forming at the same time. At the moment when digital culture and social justice movements were in formation, McPherson writes, "it seems at best naive to imagine that cultural and computational operating systems don't mutually infect one another."[19] In failing to account for the ways that racial logics undergird the very structures of digital culture, digital humanists often reify a postracial ideology where the modularity of technology and coding serve to erase the impact of social inequalities. To remedy these absences and blind spots, a number of scholars have begun to carve out a deliberate space for interrogating the assumptions behind work in the Digital Humanities and situating its development within material histories of exclusion and oppression. These kinds of discussions have taken place in many different forms—including through hashtags on Twitter; blog posts and tumblrs; sessions at conferences like THATcamp, ASA, and MLA; as well as online academic journals.[20] Two of the most active collectives of researchers who work to expand this particular line of scholarship within Digital Humanities are TransformDH and PostcolonialDH. Their interventions focus on expanding the purview of Digital Humanities to more intentionally account for vulnerable populations—including who have been marginalized due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class—and the way that they have been erased from more mainstream Digital Humanities discourses.

One of the ways that postcolonial scholars have worked to bring their perspective to bear within the Digital Humanities has been the development of projects designed to "decolonize the archive." Relying on the affordances of the Internet as a space that is relatively open, accessible, expansive, and durable, much work in the Digital Humanities has gone into the digitization of lost or excluded texts. For postcolonial scholars, this process of digitization and sharing takes on a political purpose. We can look at the example of Adeline Koh's project "Digitizing Chinese Englishmen," which seeks to digitize and annotate a literary magazine from colonial Singapore called *Straits Chinese Magazine*. Alongside making this literature more widely available, one of the project's broader aims is to contribute to an alternative representation of the relationship between colonizers and their subjects:

> *Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'* is an attempt to give voice and representation to formerly colonized subjects, and to attempt to work against the "imperial meaning-making" of the archive by implementing new types of reading and commenting technologies that disrupt the idea of dominant and subjugated knowledges.

This explanation reminds us that archives are often imperial projects that serve to shore up the perspective of the dominant class and subjugate those classified as inferior—whether that is through the way that histories are framed, how maps are drawn, what books are included in libraries, what images are held up as ideal, or what counts as knowledge.[21] Together, these different imperial projects contribute to an archive imbued with and reflective of the power relations that sustain it. Digital archives have often remediated these power dynamics, serving to erase subjugated histories or uphold colonial narratives and assumptions. For those working under the banner of Postcolonial DH or Transforming DH, it is important to question these commonsense practices and remedy these exclusions.

When thinking about how Asian American studies fits in to this demand for a new kind of Digital Humanities, we can first see a parallel interest in bringing subjugated histories forward for recognition and interrogation. As with postcolonial scholars, Asian Americanists posit a distinction between the object of study and the theory or approach that informs such studies.

That is, they insist upon a research framework that does not merely study Asian American bodies. Rather, Asian American studies must be historically situated as a field of study with specific commitments; as Kent Ono has stated, "drawing attention to historical context and to power, to social relations, and to structured inequity remains a key feature within contemporary Asian American scholarship."[22] The category of "Asian American" is a political designation that has been given value through the recognition and validation of the collective struggles that communities of color faced in the United States. This recognition of political solidarity exists concomitantly in tension with the reality of what Lisa Lowe has famously termed the "heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity"[23] of the lives and experiences of those encompassed within Asian America. Even when considering the relationship of Asian Americans to postcoloniality, Asian Americanists have called attention to the fact that Asian settlers in Hawaii are participants in the colonization of Native Hawaiians.[24] Others have criticized the field of Asian American studies for excluding, marginalizing, or tokenizing entire communities— including Pacific Islanders, South Asians, and Southeast Asians, or ethnic groups such as the Hmong. We can see that Asian American studies as a collective of individuals, communities, and institutions continues to struggle with many of these same issues of homogenization and exclusion. Thus as Asian Americanists take up work within the Digital Humanities, their interventions demand recognition of the salience of race and ethnicity in the lives of individuals and a careful eye toward the way that the fluidity of identity and the impact of history can shape data.

Digitizing Asian American: Big Data, Small Population

In order to make sense of the way that these Asian American interventions into Digital Humanities might work, let us look at an example. The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center has undertaken a number of different projects in the digital realm, particularly since their hire of a dedicated Curator of Digital and Emerging Media at the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. In May 2014, they organized an event to contribute and edit Wikipedia entries on Asian America. With physical meetups in Washington DC, New York, Austin, and Los Angeles, the #WikiAPA event served as a catalyst for educating Asian Americans about how to become Wikipedia contributors and providing the opportunity for them to collectively participate in improving the global online resource. #WikiAPA served to call attention to the fact that there are consequences when digital resources are overwhelming authored by white men, and that we must labor collectively to remedy these problems. In particular, we can note that Wikipedia is a site that is often celebrated for its collaborative authorship, despite the fact that its hundreds of thousands of contributors are largely homogenous in gender and racial identities.[25] Yet with the recognition of this imbalance and its political consequences, we can see that Wikipedia also offers an opportunity to call upon the strengths of participatory culture— the low barriers to participation, the value placed on individual contributions, and the collective strength of the masses coming together to create a polyvocal database. Projects like #WikiAPA reflect the idea that when Asian Americanists do Digital Humanities work, there is the potential for overlap between the production of theory and the production of data—an overlap that is rare, as evidenced by the debates surrounding "more hack less yack"[26] wherein critique/theory are presumed to forestall practice/doing.

This conflict between theory and practice is of particular relevance to the Asian American studies perspective on Digital Humanities research, particularly given that one of the key projects of Digital Humanities has been to develop tools for making sense of what is known as "big data." The world has always consisted of far more data points than any researcher could ever

fully comprehend or assess. Even analog objects such as newspaper articles or museum artifacts number in the millions and provide challenge for researchers, who must always draw boundaries around what they consider to be more manageable sample sizes. Yet as our world becomes increasingly digitized, data proliferate exponentially—from content that was born digital such as tweets or emails, to data automatically produced and recorded by digital sensors, to large archives of government data that are now available in digital form. With the proliferation of digital text, images, audio, and video, digital data now multiply at an unprecedented rate and are relatively accessible. Part of the work of Digital Humanities has been to corral and make sense of these data, with researchers working to develop tools for visualizing, cataloguing, and analyzing large amounts of data.

In many ways, Asian Americans have had a troubled relationship to big data. On the one hand, the project of Asian American studies has always been to create more data about this unique and understudied population. Yet the project of producing data about Asian Americans is often subject to critique, particularly when those data are used to make representative or general claims about the entire population. These issues came to the fore in 2012, when the Pew Research Center released a report called "The Rise of Asian Americans" that set out to comprehensively document the demographic characteristics of Asian Americans.[27] The study was based on a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian Americans, and it examined topics such as values, education and career, religious beliefs and practices, economic circumstances, marriage norms, and many others. While the report provided a wealth of interesting and useful data about Asian Americans—and served to fill a large gap in Pew's data collection, which does not commonly include Asian Americans[28]—it was roundly critiqued by Asian American community organizations, scholars, and advocates.[29] In particular, they spoke out against the report's conclusions that Asian Americans are overwhelming successful in terms of income and education. A *Wall Street Journal* article summarizing the report with the headline "Asians Top Immigration Class," opened with this lede: "Asians are the fastest-growing, most educated and highest-earning population in the U.S., according to a new report that paints the majority-immigrant group as a boon to an economy that has come to rely increasingly on skilled workers."[30] As critics noted, the report's conclusions and statements of summary served to uphold the myth of model minority, or the assumption that all Asian American immigrants are successful, particularly in comparison to other minority groups like Hispanics and African Americans. This harmful stereotype neglects the extreme disparities within the diverse category of Asian American, where specific groups such as Hmong, Laotians, Cambodians, Guamanians, Native Hawaiians, and Tongans struggle with poverty and educational achievement. The report focused on the six largest ethnic groups in the U.S.—Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese—and included very little study of these smaller populations. Asian Americanists argue that it is these smallest populations who demand the closest attention. It is their needs and their histories that are systemically erased in the production of big data, as their specific experiences can so easily be categorized as statistically insignificant. Indeed, within the Pew report on Asian Americans, only 176 individuals from ethnicities outside of the "Big Six" were interviewed. This means that out of the 45 ethnicities encompassed by the umbrella category of Asian America, 39 different ethnicities were represented by 176 individuals.

The responses to this form of data collection and dissemination remind us of the political dimensions of data. Although few disputed the realities that were reflected in the report's findings, the report was condemned because of its overwhelmingly positive framing, failure to meaningfully expose the limits of its disaggregation, and marginalization of so many subsections of the population. The report conflicted with an Asian American studies ethics of how and why we perform research—an ethic that can be used to shape the future of Digital Humanities.

Although big data are often celebrated for their ability to bring about innovation, insight, and increased knowledge, scholars from Asian American studies and other fields representing marginalized communities implore caution. As Crawford, Miltner, and Gray remind us in their special issue on big data in the International Journal of Communications:

> Big data continues to present blind spots and problems of representativeness, precisely because it cannot account for those who participate in the social world in ways that do not register as digital signals. It is big data's opacity to outsiders and subsequent claims to veracity through volume that discursively neutralizes the tendency to make errors, fail to account for certain people and communities, or discriminate.[31]

As we look forward to future research and projects that blend Asian American and Digital Humanities perspectives, methodologies, and ethics, this critique of the way that data can contribute to oppression is important to heed.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of Asian American studies in the digital age and the emergence of the Digital Humanities as a field of study. We believe in the increasing relevance of Asian American studies to the Digital Humanities and the Digital Humanities to Asian American studies; an intersection that we view with cautious optimism. The pace of technological change and its integration into everyday life, the growing popularity of Digital Humanities research, and the projected growth of the Asian population in the U.S. and around the world, makes a case for the importance of Asian American studies as Digital Humanities. As our overview suggests, Asian American studies as Digital Humanities argues that the meaning of these two formations—digital technology and Asian America—can come into focus through their relationship to each other. During an era when technology continues to be embraced as an opportunity to deepen the relevance of the humanities and its institutionalization, Asian American studies provides critical perspective on the use technology. This means treating technology not as a tool, but as a discursive formation in relation to communities of color, and as an exercise of power and ideology. In turn, research and methods in Digital Humanities suggest how Asian American studies offers a dynamic form of engagement. The conception of Asian America as technology suggests how Asian American studies may reconsider core concepts such as race and ethnicity within a different framework: identity as being constituted by technology in addition to being represented by it. This approach encourages understanding Asian American experiences in kinship with other concepts relating to the discourse of technology. As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun contends, race as technology shifts the analysis from what race is and is not, to an ethical question: "what relations does race set up?"[32] How is race interpolated with other discursive formations and concerns?

It is our hope that the notion of Asian American studies as Digital Humanities will spur novel forms of Asian American scholarly research and production. The methods and tools of Digital Humanities not only illustrate how Asian American studies can visualize its research and reinterpret the data of research about Asian Americans, but the values associated with Digital Humanities—including access, collaboration, experimentation and participation—can spark new and innovative models of scholarly engagement in Asian American studies. Instead of measuring the institutionalization of Asian American studies on campuses in terms of Asian American studies graduates and faculty, we see promise in increasing collaborations with research in digital code, design, and media studies to leverage the intellectual capital of Asian

American studies as a field with a stake in the institutionalization of other disciplines. Additionally, the adoption of Digital Humanities work[33] in Asian American studies courses can increase the relevance of Asian American studies; the digital labor and learning of Asian American knowledge adds to the archive of its study as a born-digital experience. Put differently, the increase of Asian American digital output increases the relevance of Asian American studies to Digital Humanities. The promise of Asian American studies as Digital Humanities, we believe, is embedded in the process of writing this chapter, which was born out of online exchange between two researchers from different fields and neither one from Asian American studies proper. However, we share a mutual concern for rethinking "Asian America" as a digital experience, believing that this conception of Asian America not only remains faithful to the Asian American studies' founding commitments to social justice and empowerment, but that Asian American experiences offer a relevant and exciting space to understand the nature of digital life and knowledge in the 21st Century.

Notes

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